



Priests for Life/Wikimedia Commons
Fr. Frank Pavone

Vatican Defrocks Prominent Pro-life Priest

A prominent Catholic priest has been laicized, or defrocked, by the Roman Catholic Church over conduct that the Vatican called “blasphemous.” The decision to remove Father Frank Pavone from the priesthood was apparently made on November 9 by the Vatican, and came to light last week in a letter dated December 13 from the Vatican ambassador to the U.S., Archbishop Christophe Pierre.

Pavone, a strong supporter of former President Donald Trump and the national director of the pro-life organization [Priests for Life](#), was dismissed by the Vatican for “blasphemous communications on social media” and “persistent disobedience of the lawful instructions of his diocesan bishop.”

While it was unclear just what “blasphemy” Pavone may have uttered, a 2020 tweet from the former priest may show some of what upset the progressive Vatican under the social-justice Pope Francis.

Just ahead of the 2020 U.S. election, Pavone tweeted: “Why is it that the supporters of this g***amn loser Biden and his morally corrupt, America-hating, God hating Democrat party can’t say a g***amn thing in support of their loser candidate without using the word Trump? What the hell do you have to say for yourselves losers?”

So, not really very “priestly” language — at least in that case.

Another incident occurred in 2016 during a Facebook livestream in which Pavone repeatedly placed an aborted fetus on a church altar in an appeal to get voters to turn out for Trump.

“Here before me lies a baby killed by abortion in the second trimester of pregnancy,” Pavone reportedly said in the video. “But today we are going to pray with this baby and we are going to let this baby’s body bear witness

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to our nation as we begin the process to elect our next president.”

According to the Vatican, Pavone was given several opportunities to mend his ways.

“Father Pavone was given ample opportunity to defend himself in the canonical proceedings, and he was also given multiple opportunities to submit himself to the authority of his diocesan bishop,” said a statement from the Vatican. “It was determined that Father Pavone had no reasonable justification for his actions.”

Pavone, however, claimed that he was among the last to know of his ousting. On Saturday, Pavone spoke to Catholic News Agency (CNA) about the situation.

“How did CNA learn about this before I did?” Pavone reportedly asked. He added that CNA’s inquiry was “the very first communication that came to me about this.”

In a Saturday tweet, Pavone compared his defrocking to an abortion. “Hi friends... So in every profession, including the priesthood, if you defend the #unborn, you will be treated like them!” Pavone wrote. “The only difference is that when we are ‘aborted,’ we continue to speak, loud and clear.”

Hi friends... So in every profession, including the priesthood, if you defend the [#unborn](#), you will be treated like them!

The only difference is that when we are “aborted,” we continue to speak, loud and clear.

— Fr. Frank Pavone (@frfrankpavone) [December 18, 2022](#)

Pavone ended up canceling his Sunday Mass on December 18, but the pro-life leader was defiant in a [statement](#) in which he vowed to continue in his mission to save unborn lives.

“I am immersed during these days in the planning of Priests for Life activities for 2023, starting with the events we are organizing at the March for Life and Walk for Life West Coast, and in preparing our activity report for 2022. In conjunction with all this, I continue to share with you all that I do each hour of each day,” he stated.

While Pavone said he was surprised by the Vatican’s action, he apparently knew that something was coming.

“This has been the plan of some of the bishops for many years, and what has unfolded has not been dialog, but a one-sided narrative of abuse. I have told and will continue to tell in great detail the story of the ongoing abuse that some in the hierarchy have subjected me to,” he wrote.

Stating he has been under attack from the Catholic Church hierarchy for some time, he outlined several of those alleged abuses in a [letter](#) available on his website.

“This latest development from the Vatican is the result of an abusive process, to which I have been objecting for years and during which all my advisors have instructed me not to have contact with Bishop [Patrick] Zurek [of the Amarillo diocese]. The process has lacked both transparency and commonsense,” Pavone said in his statement.

According to the December 13 letter from Archbishop Pierre, the decision from the Vatican is final, with “no possibility of appeal.”

Despite the “no appeal” pronouncement, a [petition](#) has begun requesting that “POPE FRANCIS IMMEDIATELY STOP HIS ATTACKS AGAINST FAITHFUL PRIESTS!”

“If Pope Francis and this Vatican regime can get away with expelling faithful priests like Fr. Frank Pavone, then the Catholic Church may truly be entering the darkest period of her existence!” the petition states.